

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims replaces all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1-30. (Cancelled)

31. (New) A computer-based transactional system for facilitating payment between participant accounts maintained within the transactional system, the transactional system configured to authorize the transfer of funds between a first financial account associated with a buyer participant and a second financial account associated with a seller participant in response to the first and second participants conducting transactions and without requiring connection to an external financial institution, said transactional system integrated with an electronic auction and fixed price sales system, the transactional system comprising:

- (a) a computer system in communication with the Internet and capable of executing a plurality of substantially simultaneous processes;
- (b) one or more processes executing on the computer system to perform the following:
  - i. maintain an account database for tracking account information for a plurality of participants within the transactional system;
  - ii. require the buyer participant and the seller participant each to maintain accounts within the transactional system;
  - iii. monitor a balance of funds available in each account within the transactional system;

- iv. deduct a payment amount from the buyer participant's account corresponding to an accepted offer made by the buyer participant to purchase one or more goods or collectibles offered for sale by the seller participant via said integrated electronic auction and fixed-price sales system; and
- v. transfer the deducted payment amount to the seller participant's account within the transactional system;

the integrated electronic auction and fixed-price sales system comprising:

- (a) a computer system in communication with the Internet and capable of executing a plurality of substantially simultaneous processes;
- (b) one or more processes executing on the computer system to perform the following:
- (c) provide via the Internet a participant interface for participants to select a predetermined item category from among a plurality of predetermined item categories, the category selection providing a further predetermined sub-category selection for item categorization, the item categorization corresponding to at least one or more goods and collectible categories;
- (d) provide to a participant seller, via an automated seller's interface to the system, a selling mode selection between at least an ascending bid auction mode and a fixed price mode, the selling mode selection enabling the participant seller to select the selling mode format for at least one good or collectible posted by the participant seller for sale on the electronic auction and fixed-price sales system; and

- (e) generating a unique identification code or number for each ascending bid auction or fixed price instance established by the participant seller in the electronic auction and fixed-priced sales system; and

locking a data record associated with the item offered for sale in said ascending bid auction mode or fixed-price mode to prevent the sale of the same item twice to different or the same participant buyer in the electronic auction and fixed-price sales system.

32. (New) The transactional system of claim 31 wherein a positive account balance in the buyer participant's account results from one or more of the following:

- i. proceeds from a past sale of at least one item posted for sale; and
- ii. from the transfer of funds to the buyer participant's account from a financial institution associated with the buyer participant.

33. (New) The transactional system of claim 31 wherein a positive account balance for a participant account is cleared by one or more of the following:

- i. a check is printed and made paid to the order of the seller participant; and
- ii. by electronic fund transfer from a financial institution associated with the transactional system to a financial institution associated with the participant.

34. (New) The transactional system of claim 31 wherein credit card processing fees or external financial network charges are eliminated by use of positive available balances in the participant accounts in the buying and selling of collectable goods via the electronic auction and fixed price sales system by transferring accounting balances between the participant accounts maintained within the transactional system.

35. (New) The transactional system of claim 31 wherein the buyer participant accepts the offer for sale from the seller participant, wherein the seller participant previously purchased

the item as a network participant in the electronic auction and fixed price sales system and the buyer participant initiates the transactional system to clear the purchase by book entry transaction between the buyer participant account and the seller participant account.

36. (New) The transactional system of claim 31 further returning an interest bearing accounting on positive balances maintained in the participant accounts of a plurality of Internet users whom maintain participant accounts within the transactional system.

37. (New) An internet-based transactional system for establishing multiple participant accounts that can be debited and credited in accounting for the funds used and generated by participant transactions in the system, the system clearing transactions by connecting a participant to a participant account maintained within the system and transferring funds from a participant acting as a buyer participant in the system to a participant acting as a seller participant in the system, wherein the transaction is based at least in part on the participant acting as the seller in the system posting an item for sale in the system and the participant acting as a buyer in the system authorizing the transfer of funds for purchasing the item for sale in the system by connecting to a participant account maintained within the system, the system clearing the transaction by debiting the participant account for the participant acting as the buyer and crediting the participant account for the participant acting as the seller, the system comprising:

- (a) a computer system in communication with the Internet and capable of executing a plurality of substantially simultaneous processes;
- (b) one or more processes executing on the computer system to perform the following:
  - (i) establish multiple participant accounts based on information received from multiple participants, the multiple participant account balances capable of being debited and credited to account for the funds used and generated by participant transactions within the system;
  - (ii) automatically, in response to a participant interface to the system, initiate a selling instance based at least in part on information received from a

- participant acting as a seller participant in the system, the instance describing an item offered for sale via the system;
- (iii) connecting a participant acting as a buyer in the system to at least one participant account maintained within the system and associated with the participant acting as the buyer in the system; and
  - (iv) clearing the transaction between the participant acting as the buyer in the system with the participant acting as the seller in the system by debiting the participant account of the participant acting as the buyer and crediting the participant account for the participant acting as the seller within the system, the transaction between the participant acting as the buyer in the system and the participant acting as the seller in the system being responsive at least in part on the participant acting as the buyer in the system selecting an item instance generated by the system in response to the participant acting as a seller via the system.

38. (New) The internet-based transactions system of claim 37, wherein the initiated selling instance, generated in response to a participant interface to the system where the participant is acting as a seller, comprises an independent auction instance executing substantially simultaneously with a plurality of other auction instances initiated by at least one other participant within the system.

39. (New) The internet-based transactions system of claim 37, wherein the initiated selling instance, generated in response to a participant input from a participant interface to the system where the participant is acting as a seller, comprises providing a predetermined category selection to the participant acting as the seller, the predetermined category selection providing a topical arrangement of selling instances to participants acting as buyers by maintaining a topical navigational for participants acting as buyers to navigate a topically arranged interface to the system wherein the topical navigation corresponds at least in part to the predetermined category selection provided to the participant acting as the seller interface a selection of a category for the selling instance generated in response to a participant acting as a seller.

40. (New) The internet-based transactions system of claim 37, wherein the initiated selling instance, generated in response to a participant input from a participant interface to the system where the participant is acting as a seller, includes item description information and the system provides a unique code to confirm item listing to the participant acting as a seller.

41. (New) The internet-based transactional system of claim 37, wherein:  
the transactional system is under a first entity's control;  
the information describing the item is offered for sale in an ascending bid auction mode and is received from a computer system independently operated by the participant acting as the seller; and

the auction instance for the participant acting as the seller is initiated while the item remains outside the first entity's possession.

42. (New) The internet-based transaction system of claim 41, wherein the auction instance for the participant acting as the seller is initiated while the item remains outside the first entity's control.

43. (New) The internet based transaction system of claim 37, wherein the auction instance for the participant acting as the seller is initiated while the item remains in the control of the participant acting as the seller.

44. (New) An automated method, performed by a computer-based transactional system in conjunction with a computer-based auction system, for conducting multiple simultaneous participant-to-participant auctions via a computer auction system connected to a data packet network and the world wide web in a fully automated, topically arranged system that can be searched by topical categories, and wherein sellers and buyers can consummate transactions between accounts maintained within the system, the computer-based transactional system and computer-based auction system being under the control of a first entity, the method comprising:

establishing a participant's account in the computer-based transactional system wherein the participant, via the computer-based transactional system, can conduct transactions with other participants that maintain accounts within the system without accessing an external financial institution or automated clearinghouse to transfer an accounting of funds payable to a participant account that is maintained within the computer-based transactional system;

receiving via the data packet network from the participant acting as the seller a description of an item offered for auction, the received description including a category selected from a list of categories provided by the auction system;

in response to receiving a description of an item for auction from the seller participant, generating a unique tracking identifier for the item;

displaying, in response to a search request from a participant acting as a buyer, the description of the item for auction in a presentation format via the world wide web, the display including advertisements that generate revenue for the auction system;

automatically auctioning the item for auction posted by the seller participant, the auction being conducted while the item for auction remains outside of the first entity's possession;

receiving at least one bid for the item for auction from at least one bidder via a world wide web interface, an automated computer-implemented auction process processing the bid to determine whether to post to bid as the current high bid for the item for auction;

determining a final high bidder for the item via the computer-implemented auction process and notifying the high bidder that he or she is the winner of auction; and

conducting a transaction between the participant buyer account maintained within the computer-based transactional system and the participant seller account maintained within the computer-based transactional system to move the accounting for funds from the participant buyer account maintained within the system and the participant seller account maintained within the system to clear a transaction between the participant buyer winning the item via the computer-implemented auction process and the participant seller selling the item via the computer-implemented auction process.